

BE CAREFUL WITH HANDS- FREE CELL EAR PIECES, SAY EXPERTS

Most of Us Turn Up the Volume of Ear Pieces too High Due to Car and Traffic Ambient Noises, Which May Cause Hearing Damage

ORANGE, CA. (May 00, 2008) -- Just because the new California law says you can't put your cell phone to your ear beginning July 1, that does not mean your ears are safe.

Ear specialists say while the new law is great news for driver safety, drivers should use hands-free ear pieces with caution. "There is a lot of ambient noise in a car, typically about 40-50 decibels, and most of us will unconsciously strain to hear, even with ear pieces," said Dr. Robert Del Junco, an ear, nose and throat specialist at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange. "So naturally, we turn up the volume as high as we can to make hearing easier and therein lays the danger."

The result could cause hearing problems, both acute and long term, he said.

"Better to use a microphone built into your car's sound system or one that can be placed in the sun visor," he suggested.

If you must use an ear piece, Dr. Del Junco says to turn off the car's radio and roll up the windows to reduce any noise distraction. "And keep the volume low enough to hear without straining."

Dr. Del Junco says to see your doctor if you are having difficulty hearing even with an ear piece.

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